



Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission

Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des
télécommunications canadiennes

REPORT
OF THE
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON
FRENCH-LANGUAGE
MUSIC



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(La version française est aussi disponible)

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Montréal
5 December 1985

Mr. André Bureau
Chairman
Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N2

Dear Mr Bureau:

Pursuant to the terms of reference you assigned us last summer, please find enclosed the report of the CRTC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FRENCH-LANGUAGE MUSIC.

The Committee's recommendations are found on pages 23 to 29.

The co-chairmen's observations are on page 28.

We are pleased to have worked on the Committee and to have been of service to the CRTC.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information.

Yours truly,

(signed)
Denys Bergeron
Jean-Pierre Coallier

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1. Introduction

Pursuant to Public Notice CRTC 1985-100 (related document I, available on request), the Commission established an advisory committee, which in turn set up a task force comprised of two co-chairmen, namely Jean-Pierre Coallier and Denys Bergeron, and ten members representing various interested parties, to examine the problems facing writers, composers, performers, producers, distributors and broadcasters of French-language music.

The terms of reference of the task force were to examine the availability of French-language recordings and ways broadcasters, together with the recording industry and other interested parties, can stimulate and promote existing Francophone products and new French-language musical talent through the production of recordings and videos. Consultations were held on 16 July, 7 and 27 August, and 11 and 19 September in Montréal.

This report attempts to give as faithful an account as possible of the opinions expressed and the experiences related by the representatives of the various parties at the meetings. The report should not be interpreted as a judgment or evaluation of their comments.

Although some remarks and comments were contradictory, given the divergent views on the topic of discussion, the subcommittee made every effort to come to a consensus with respect to priorities, solutions and the recommendations to the advisory committee.

2. Background

Beginning in 1972, studies conducted jointly by the Commission and broadcasters showed that some French-language stations broadcast less than 50% French-language musical selections.

In 1973, because it considered that French-language stations have an important role to play in safeguarding and enriching Francophone cultural expression, the Commission announced that 75% of the vocal popular music selections broadcast between 6 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday, and 65% of the total vocal selections broadcast each week should be in French.

When the licences for a number of Montréal stations were renewed in 1980, the Commission noted that some broadcasters had difficulty meeting the requirements set in 1973. Representations made to the Commission at that time specified that the problem was particularly serious for stations programming rock music. Studies conducted by the Commission in response

to these concerns indicated, however, that the production of French-language records had not decreased significantly. Consequently, the Commission maintained the minimum of 65% for weekly programming but eliminated the 75% requirement between 6 am and 6 pm.

The Commission again examined this issue in connection with its review of radio policy. In Public Notice CRTC 1983-43 dated 3 March 1983, entitled "Policy Statement on the Review of Radio", the Commission stated that it was not convinced that a reduction in the 65% minimum was warranted but, in the case of certain rock-oriented stations, it indicated it would be willing to consider requests for reductions.

In Decision CRTC 83-804 renewing the licence of CKOI-FM, the Commission recognized the special circumstances of the licensee as the only French-language radio station in Montréal which was broadcasting in a progressive rock format and approved the proposed reduction of French-language vocal music to 55%. At the same time, the Commission acknowledged the licensee's plans for the promotion and development of new French-language musical talent.

In Decision CRTC 84-653 dated 16 August 1984 renewing the licence for CJMF-FM in Québec, the Commission, "mindful of the high level of rock-oriented music proposed by the licensee, and the limited production of French-language records of that nature," authorized a 60% level of French-language vocal music. The Commission also took into account the licensee's commitment to promote Canadian talent, in particular an annual competition providing recording opportunities for twelve performers.

At a Public Hearing on 25 March 1985, two Montréal FM stations, CKOI-FM Verdun and CKMF-FM Montréal, explained to the Commission the difficulties they had experienced in complying with the minimum authorized levels of French-language vocal music, and submitted statistics to support their contention that there had been a significant decline in the production of French-language recordings, particularly in the types of music they broadcast, namely progressive rock and dance music. At the same hearing, the licensees described the measures they had undertaken to support new French-language musical artists. Although these endeavours had contributed to the development of new Canadian performers, the licensees acknowledged that they had not succeeded in significantly increasing the production of French-language records.

In Decisions CRTC 85-356, 85-357 and 85-361 dated 22 May 1985, the Commission denied the levels of French-language vocal music proposed by

CKOI-FM Verdun, CKMF-FM Montréal and CHOI-FM Québec. At the same time, the Commission announced that it would be setting up an advisory committee "to assess the availability of French-language recordings for each genre of popular music, whether produced in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, in Europe or in other French-speaking countries" (Public Notice CRTC 1985-100). The committee's terms of reference also included instructions to examine the most effective ways in which Francophone broadcasters, in association with the recording industry and other interested parties, can stimulate and promote new French-language musical talent through the production of records and videos. A point to note is that the committee considers the term "broadcaster" to include television broadcasters.

On 16 July 1985, André Bureau, Chairman of the CRTC, called the first meeting of the advisory committee, including representatives from the recording, broadcasting and entertainment industries and government officials (related document II). Following this meeting, the advisory committee set up a task force, under the co-chairmanship of Jean-Pierre Coallier of CIEL-FM and Denys Bergeron of ADISQ, with ten members representing the various parties (related document III), to examine all the problems facing writers, composers, performers, producers, distributors and broadcasters of French-language music and to recommend possible solutions to the advisory committee.

It should be noted that the 65% French vocal music standard and the Canadian content standard are not the same thing. The Commission's requirement concerns only the language of songs, not their origin. In the extreme case, a broadcaster can meet the 65% standard without broadcasting a single Canadian French-language selection and still meet the Canadian content requirement included in its conditions of licence or stipulated by the Radio (AM) Broadcasting Regulations, as the case may be (usually 20 to 30% of all musical selections, if not more) by broadcasting Canadian English-language songs and Canadian instrumental selections. According to figures supplied by three Montréal stations specializing in progressive rock and dance music, foreign French-language songs come first with 35%, followed by foreign English-language songs (32.7%), Canadian French-language songs (25%) and Canadian English-language songs (7.3%).

Another point to note is that the 65% standard applies on a weekly basis for the broadcast period from 6 am to midnight. When the Commission first issued its French-language vocal music standards in 1973, it required 75% French vocal musical selections during peak listening hours, between 6 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday. Since it repealed this requirement, however, the Commission has not stipulated that French-language vocal music must be spread out evenly over the day and week.

3. The context of the problem

A. Comments by subcommittee members

The following attempts to relate participants' comments about the problem raised by the 65% standard. The subcommittee included representatives of, among other groups, the Union des Artistes (UDA), the Société professionnelle de auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ), the Association de l'industrie du disque et du spectacle du Québec (ADISQ), and radio stations CKOI-FM Verdun, CKMF-FM and CITE-FM Montréal, CJMF-FM Québec and CIEL-FM Longueuil. (Related document IV contains the minutes.)

1. Comments by UDA

UDA's position is quite clear: its representatives are opposed to a reduction of the 65% standard.

The problem, according to UDA, is that music formats are far too specialized. Some artists are "victims" of the image they project or the type of music they perform and are therefore excluded from certain broadcast circuits.

Again according to UDA representatives, broadcasters have a favourable bias toward English-language music and neglect French-language music by not playing it during peak listening hours.

Finally, UDA claims that there is enough talent in Quebec and in Francophone countries to provide enough music to reach the 65% standard and that the problem is mainly a lack of funds to enable musicians to produce records. This is why there is a problem of supply.

With regard to residuals for videoclips, UDA submitted evidence that, although there is no specific agreement on the matter at present, one television broadcaster (producer) has stated that it is willing to negotiate such an agreement.

2. Comments by SPACQ

On behalf of 130 Quebec writers and composers, SPACQ took a stand against a reduction in the 65% standard for French-language vocal music, half of which ought to be Canadian. Such a reduction

would effectively take away all motivation among writers and composers and thereby further reduce the production of French-language vocal music. The only producers that could survive such a drop in French-language vocal music would be the major producers who encourage artists with established reputations. SPACQ representatives deplore the fact that artists must contend with the "image" and "sound" they project. Being consigned to a category limits artists' exposure on stations with specialized formats. Similarly, SPACQ deplores the fact that radio stations persist in showing preference for English-language musical selections. Unfortunately, this prompts the new generation of artists to sing in English and thus undermines the authenticity and originality of Francophone culture.

With respect to creative output as such, SPACQ representatives pointed out that CAPAC indicated that 150 new French-language songs are registered each week. In SPACQ's opinion, the problem is definitely one of production, distribution and broadcasting.

Finally, SPACQ considers that English-language stations in Quebec have a role to play in the development of French-language music. Therefore, they should ensure that 35% of their vocal musical selections be in French and that half of it be Canadian.

3. Comments by ADISQ

One of the ADISQ representatives preferred to approach the problem of broadcasters as a whole, since it was clear in his mind that the major broadcasters have a direct influence over smaller broadcasters. Similarly, he suggested that when discussing the problems of the recording industry, including production and marketing, all the problems raised should be taken into account.

He expressed his point of view regarding the 65% French-language content and its consequences.

First of all, the CRTC directive to broadcast 65% French-language vocal music dates from 1973. Since that time, a number of new French-language FM stations have been established in Montréal and Québec and the market has become increasingly fragmented. During the same period, English-language stations have been required to broadcast 5% French-language vocal selections but they do not seem to have met this requirement.

With respect to distribution, there were some 750 independent sales outlets in 1978. In June 1985, only 300 were left. Moreover, the biggest share of the market is held by distributor chains, most of which are owned by Anglophone interests. The biggest subdistributors (Sherman, Sam and others) buy in Toronto, and 55% of records sold are handled by them.

As far as production and marketing are concerned, there are only one or two French-language productions per year in which \$100,000 or more are invested. There is therefore a funding problem.

Regarding imports, it is a known fact that radio stations can react much more quickly than record companies. They can broadcast foreign French-language music well before it is available in record stores here.

Finally, again according to ADISQ, the main problems faced by broadcasters are the following:

- the 65% French-language vocal music requirement;
- production: there is a lack of capital, and this means that record companies can no longer afford to take risks;
- distribution and marketing: distributors buy only records they are sure to sell, and they cannot be forced to buy records that are going to sit on the shelves.

On another topic, a representative of ADISQ submitted a statistical table to the subcommittee showing the number of long-playing records accepted at the time of their gala. It shows that since 1979, the number of long-playing records in the Quebec writer-composer-performer category has dropped drastically, whereas the number of long-playing records in other categories such as MOR and Rock has grown sharply, even though the total number of records in the running has remained about the same over the past three years.

Number of long-playing records in the running

1983 - 72
1984 - 67
1985 - 72

Rock Category

1979 - 8
1985 - 20

MOR Category

1979 - 15
1985 - 29

Quebec writer-composer-performer Category

1979 - 50
1985 - 12

Male Performer: 50 in 1985

Female Performer: 33 in 1985

4. Comments by broadcasters who participated in the task force

a) CKMF-FM

The CKMF-FM representative admitted that the station had problems meeting the 65% standard. In fact, he called for a reduction in the standard. He complained about the poor production in the "dance music" subcategory and explained this by the fact that most producers concentrate on the Anglophone market, because it is more profitable in the short term.

b) CKOI-FM

The representative of CKOI-FM, a progressive rock-oriented station, called for a reduction in the 55% quota granted to it because of its music format. According to the representative, a number of problems had arisen: regulation ill-adapted to the situation in the French-language music industry; competition from English-language stations; strict foreground format requirements; the fact that MuchMusic is carried on the cable FM band; lack of retail distribution; the lack of a Quebec star system; and consumer demand for greater quality.

c) CJMF-FM

The CJMF-FM representative was opposed to maintaining the 65% standard and called for it to be reduced. This rock station has trouble meeting the 60% requirement set for it by the Commission. A radio station should be regarded primarily as a commercial undertaking. The representative stated that there was a serious supply and distribution problem because of a lack of creative production, especially of rock music. As a possible solution, he suggested abolishing the 65% French-language vocal music requirement and replacing it with a 30 or 35% French-language Canadian content requirement, so as to provide greater opportunity for writers and composers. He further proposed excluding the musical selections broadcast during foreground format programs from the calculation and including the period from midnight to 3 am in the calculation. Finally, he criticized publicly owned radio for doing nothing to promote French-Canadian vocal music. He suggested that the money from sales tax on foreign works and English-language records in Quebec be used to support the production of French-language records.

d) CITE-FM

The CITE-FM representative said that the same percentage of French-language vocal music should apply to all stations, regardless of format. In her opinion, the serious problems do not concern creativity, but the production of records and the managers who advise artists. She proposed that a training school be set up for managers and producers.

She also suggested that English-language stations in Quebec broadcast a higher percentage of Canadian content, namely the equivalent of the percentage of French-language vocal music required of Francophone broadcasters.

Furthermore, the CITE-FM representative said that stations that specialize in music in subcategory 51 (popular and soft rock) also have supply problems.

Finally, she proposed that a fund be established, similar to the Anglophone FACTOR, to group broadcasters and assist in the production of French-language Canadian records.

e) CIEL-FM

The CIEL-FM representative was in favour of maintaining the 65% standard. The supply problems come mainly from the fact that music formats are too restrictive and make it difficult to get an adequate supply of French-language products. He also pointed out that supply problems are more serious in regions away from urban centres. Montréal stations have a wider choice, because they can obtain French-language products directly from Europe whereas stations operating outside the large urban centres have to depend on the local market. Consequently, co-operation between stations in large and small centres would be desirable.

He also deplored the excessive preference for Anglophone products. In his opinion, French-Canadian culture and its authenticity must be encouraged. To make up for the lack of French-language musical products, production must be improved and existing products should be used more systematically, for example, by "taking the risk" of broadcasting less well known works by Quebec or French singers outside peak listening hours.

The CIEL-FM representative also said that television should give more air time to French-language Canadian singers. Similarly, record companies should give more recording opportunities to the new generation of Quebec musicians.

Moreover, funding for French-language singers from both levels of government should be distributed properly to the artists concerned.

Finally, the CIEL-FM representative said that he deplored the fact that English-language stations do not broadcast the 5% French-language vocal music required by the CRTC.

5. Comments by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Quebec

The Department of Cultural Affairs, which has been interested in the problems of Quebec vocal and instrumental music over the past number of years, will shortly publish its "Politique de la chanson et de la musique populaire." This policy statement will set forth the Department's view of the problems in this sector and the ways it intends to improve the situation.

The Department of Cultural Affairs has already set up a number of programs over the past three years to stimulate the popular song

and music industry. These programs fall within the spirit of the future policy.

6. Proposals by SODICC (Société de développement des industries de la culture et des communications)

In April, SODICC made public its 1985-86 development plan. A number of the policy directions and priorities set out in the report concern the vocal music and entertainment sectors.

SODICC has provided financial assistance to cultural undertakings in the form of loans, loan guarantees and capital. Some examples are:

- consolidation of companies producing live recordings of concerts;
- enhanced assistance for exporting concerts;
- support for television producers, especially in the area of variety programming;
- support for major artistic events (festivals, competitions, salons, conferences, etc).

Briefly, the eligibility criteria are: cost-effectiveness of the undertaking, financial contribution of sponsors, contribution to the economic and cultural development of Quebec.

7. Comments by Department of Communications, Government of Canada

On July 15, 1985, the federal Department of Communications published its discussion paper entitled "Initiatives for the Radio and Sound Recording Industries".

Its proposals include:

- Promoting satellite networking.
- Streamlining the procedure for obtaining network licences.
- Financial participation in initiatives such as FACTOR/CTL. Allocating funds for the production of 150 to 175 sound recordings per year.

- Allocating funds to the development of radio programs using new technologies and including syndication, live concerts and specials. A significant amount of the fund could be reserved for French-language production.
- Encouraging the development of mixed programming (music and spoken word) with Canadian content; encouraging the CRTC to develop appropriate mechanisms and to re-examine all existing regulations and policies with a view to greater simplicity and flexibility.
- Establishing a fund to provide assistance in meeting the financing needs of the Canadian sound recording industry, particularly production companies. The fund could be accessible through federal and provincial financial institutions. The fund would multiply into substantial amounts of new capital, debt financing or equity financing each year. It is estimated that fifteen to twenty record production companies could reach financial maturity with the assistance of the fund.
- Seeking comments and views concerning the appropriateness of tax instruments similar to the Share Purchase Tax Credit and the Capital Cost Allowance for these industries.
- Making an annual contribution to Canadian recording companies to encourage the creation and distribution of classical and other specialized recordings.
- Establishing international radio co-production agreements. Co-produced music work would receive Canadian content credit.
- Providing support, through loans or guarantees, to assist Canadian record companies to promote Canadian recording artists abroad. Ensuring that the criteria for federal marketing assistance programs recognize the special economic and cultural characteristics of industries such as sound recording and allow increased and sustained assistance for the development of foreign markets.
- Injecting capital into the production of approximately 50 video-clips a year, ensuring that a significant amount of the funding goes to French-language production.

- Seeking comments on the relevance of extending to the Canadian sound recording and broadcasting industries skills upgrading assistance and financial and business management training through existing programs of the Department of Employment and Immigration and the Interfirm Comparison Program of the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion.
- Granting exemptions to Canadian artists on tour from customs duties and tariffs on transportation vehicles and sound and lighting equipment leased or rented from a foreign source.
- Allocating funds to support organizations such as the Canadian Independent Record Production Association (CIRPA), the Association du disque et de l'industrie du spectacle québécois (ADISQ), the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS), the Canadian Songwriters' Association, the Société professionnelle des auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ), the Canadian Music Centre, the CIRPA/ADISQ Foundation and the Canadian Broadcasting League in their activities which support the development of a Canadian presence in their industries as well as for associated research activities.

4. Methodology

At its first meeting, on 16 July, the subcommittee agreed to assign Mr. Luc Martel, from the trade magazine RadioActivité, the mandate of conducting statistical research to allow the task force to assess the availability of French-language records in each music category and to determine whether there had been an increase or decrease over the previous three years. On 27 August, Mr. Martel submitted his report entitled "Étude sur la disponibilité de la musique vocale enregistrée de langue française (période du 17 janvier 83 au 24 juin 85)" "Study on the Availability of Recorded French-language Vocal Music (17 January 83 to 24 June 85)" for discussion purposes (related document V). Commission representatives handed out other documents prepared by the CRTC: "Statistical Analysis of French-language Record Production (1973-1984)" (related document VI), "Availability of French-language Long-playing Recordings in Montreal Retail Stores in 1985" (related document VII), "Recording Industry Assistance Programs" (related document VIII) and "Consultation with Broadcasters outside the Major Urban Centres" (related document IX).

The task force also had access to the federal Department of Communications document entitled "Initiatives for the Radio and Sound Recording Industries".

At its meeting on 16 July, the task force decided to use the QUEST system (Quick Environmental Scanning Technique, a means of setting priorities based on consensus after pooling ideas and examining all problems raised) to determine effectively and exactly what problems were most pressing and had to be dealt with at subsequent meetings.

5. Research

A. Types of research done within the subcommittee

1. Study on the Availability of Recorded French-language Vocal Music (by RadioActivité)

At the request of the task force, Mr. Luc Martel, editor of the trade magazine RadioActivité, prepared a statistical study on the availability of recorded French-language vocal music.

The information in the report was gathered by RadioActivité through a compilation (Rétrospectives Radio) of the hits broadcast by the stations that contribute to RadioActivité and a weekly compilation of new domestic products received and published by RadioActivité during the period from 17 January 1983 to 24 June 1985.

The musical format of each selection was established according to CRTC subcategories: subcategory 51 - Pop and Rock - Softer, and subcategory 52 - Pop and Rock - Harder.

At a meeting on 27 August, at which Mr. Martel submitted the report, he explained that the study had been conducted in two parts:

- 1) statistical data (document handed out and appended)
- 2) exhaustive list available on request.

To help all the members of the subcommittee better understand the report, Mr. Martel made a number of clarifications. For example, he said that in 1985, foreign production of French-language vocal music was higher than in the past. Foreign production means records distributed in Quebec, not foreign records that are not available on the market in Quebec but that some broadcasters are able to obtain. He also said that the reason the production of Canadian long-playing records has remained the same over the years, while the production of 45s has increased, is that 45s cost less to

produce. He also pointed out that many recordings in the areas of folk, mood and instrumental, country and religious music are not reported to him, and therefore it is difficult for him to estimate the number of such recordings. At the same meeting, he supplied the following data on the number of long-playing records and 45s in subcategories 51 and 52 received between January and 19 August 1985.

FRENCH 45s

Canadian 117
Foreign 104

FRENCH LONG-PLAYING

Canadian 34
Foreign 34

ENGLISH 45s

Canadian 163
Foreign 610

ENGLISH LONG-PLAYING

Canadian 56
Foreign 562

In conclusion, Mr. Martel raised the following points:

1. during the past three years, the number of recordings produced has remained approximately the same each year;
2. in Quebec, there has been an increase in the broadcasting of foreign French-language products compared with Canadian French-language products during the first six months of 1985;
3. there is a difference in production between subcategories 51 and 52: there seems to be a constant supply of material in subcategory 51, whereas Quebec production of material in subcategory 52 is minimal, and there has been an increase in foreign French-language production in subcategory 52. In 1985, therefore, it is difficult for a broadcaster specializing in subcategory 52 to meet the minimum 65% French-language vocal music requirement.

Mr. Martel stated that generally stations broadcasting mainly music in subcategory 52 have trouble fulfilling their commitments with respect to French-language vocal music. He feels that French-language music in subcategory 52 is broadcast at unfavourable times and is often broadcast during the same time slots as American music, which further dilutes it.

2. Availability of French-language Long-playing Recordings in
Montréal Retail Stores in 1985 (study prepared by the CRTC)

According to this study, Montreal record stores have a smaller stock of and give less prominence to French-language recordings than to English-language recordings. The study does not, however, indicate whether a similar situation prevails in smaller centres.

3. Consultation with Broadcasters outside the Major Urban Centres
(CRTC)

Because broadcasters serving smaller communities were not represented on the task force, the Commission decided to conduct research to ascertain the requirements and problems in this specific broadcasting sector. This also made it possible to examine broadcasting and the supply of French-language recordings from a wider perspective.

Visits were made to six stations:

- CFBR Sudbury serves an area with a Francophone minority. This is one of the few stations that has already obtained an exemption from the 65% directive (reduction to 56%). Its music format is mainly based on music from the fifties, sixties and seventies.
- CIMO-FM Magog specializes in soft rock.
- CFIN-FM Coaticook is the only French-language FM station with a country format.
- CHGA-FM Maniwaki is a community radio station specializing in popular music but which also broadcasts some rock.
- CKMG is a small private station in Maniwaki that has a popular and rock music format.
- CJEM Edmundston, New Brunswick, serves an area with a large Francophone majority, although it is located near the American border. Its music format is contemporary MOR and rock.

The study revealed, first, that there are problems obtaining an adequate supply of French-language recordings in regions outside large urban centres, and second, that the supply problem is more serious for stations with rock and country music formats.

The study further revealed that although the majority of stations consulted have neither the resources nor the technical facilities to make demonstration tapes, some of them said they were in favour of pooling their resources with a number of other broadcasters in a development fund for the production of French-language music, provided that the fund is used to encourage the production of music formats that are lacking or on the decline, such as rock and country.

4. Statistical Analysis of French-language Record Production (1973-1983) (CRTC)

Statistics Canada data seem to indicate a drop of 26% in the production of French-language Canadian music: from 126 long-playing albums in 1977 to 78 albums in 1983.* The number of foreign albums available also dropped: from 116 recordings in 1977 to 52 in 1983, down 55%. Therefore, in total, the number of available French-language long-playing recordings dropped by 45% from 1977 to 1983 (242 to 132 recordings). The number of new 45s available in Canada also decreased, from 249 in 1977 to 147 in 1983, a drop of 41%.

Statistics from other sources (Audet, ADISQ, CIEL-FM), sometimes covering different periods (July to June, for example), are shown in the following comparative table and are useful especially for completing the deficient Statistics Canada compilations for the years 1979 and 1980. They were not included in the percentages quoted in the preceding paragraphs.

Finally, considering that 2,440 new English- and French-language long-playing recordings were released on the Canadian market in 1983, the number of French-language recordings account for only 5.4% of this number. (See Table I, Appendix IV.)

A point to note is that these statistics are not classified according to categories such as MOR, soft rock and heavy rock.

*These figures must be weighted because of the inaccuracy of the Statistics Canada data, particularly for the years 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Annual production of French-language recordings with Canadian
content (1973-1984): a comparative study

YEAR	45	33	SOURCE
1973	176	132	Department of Industry and Commerce
1977	105	126	Statistics Canada
1978	172 135	151 156	Pierre Audet Statistics Canada
1979	102 - 170	86 118 168	Statistics Canada ADISQ Pierre Audet
1980	74 - -	57 75 80	Statistics Canada ADISQ CIEL
1981	130	106	Statistics Canada
1982	135	86	Statistics Canada
1983	81 - 226	78 79 88	Statistics Canada ADISQ RadioActivité
1984	- 224	67 73	ADISQ RadioActivité
1985	198	68	RadioActivité (projected)

Note: These figures are based on data from a study by CEGIR for ACRTF entitled "La radio francophone au Québec et la disponibilité de pièces vocales de langue française", from Statistics Canada and from ADISQ. Compilations made from lists furnished by ADISQ cover the fiscal year from 1 July to 30 June.

B. Observations based on the research

A comparative examination of the research reveals a number of general trends in the availability and distribution of French-language recordings. We have been able to make the following observations:

- production has remained stable over the past three years;
- although there is a constant supply on the market of material in sub-category 51, Quebec production of rock, country and dance music is low, whereas the supply of foreign rock music has increased;
- there are relatively few French-language recordings available in downtown Montréal record stores, and since 1981 there has been a gradual drop in the number of such records kept in stock;
- stations in regions far from urban centres have trouble obtaining an adequate supply of French-language, especially foreign, recordings;
- the supply problem is more serious with respect to rock, dance and country music;
- of the 2 440 new French- and English-language albums released on the Canadian market in 1983, French-language recordings accounted for only 5.4%, a drop from previous years:

YEAR	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
TOTAL ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ALBUMS	2155	2524	2003	2290	2478	2187	2440
TOTAL FRANCOPHONE ALBUMS	242	293	189	202	213	181	132
% OF FRANCOPHONE ALBUMS	11.2	11.6	9.4	8.8	8.6	8.3	5.4

Source: Statistics Canada

6A) Problems raised

At the 7 August meeting, the first part of QUEST was undertaken to identify the main problems that had to be dealt with. The problems were

then divided into two categories: (A) problems affecting radio and (B) problems affecting the availability of Francophone musical products (Appendix X).

6B) Priorities and possible solutions

On 27 August and 11 September, the subcommittee used the second part of QUEST to rank in order the critical problems regarding radio and the availability of cultural products.

Solutions to these major problems were proposed.

1) PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS AFFECTING RADIO

1. Competition from English-language media (radio, recordings, other media)

- Eliminate the non-scrambled carriage of the MuchMusic sound signal on the cable FM service.
- Find a means of increasing French Canadian musical content on English-language stations.
- Eliminate the French spoken word content on English-language stations (for example, CHOM-FM - Decision CRTC 85-666).

2. Supply of French-language products/Contribution by radio stations to production (in the regions and outside Quebec)

- Increase production (lack of French-language products).
- Reinvestment (based on revenue) by broadcasters (for example, CHUM Quebec will invest \$100,000 in setting up a Quebec version of FACTOR/CTL - Decision CRTC 85-666).
- Government action (grants).
- Make bars, discotheques and record stores pay a surcharge on foreign products.

3. Bias against Quebec French-language products

- Distributors should provide better information along with their products.
- Improve product distribution by ensuring greater co-operation with respect to distribution and marketing to achieve greater effectiveness.
- Importance of support media, for example, RadioActivité.
- Greater co-operation:
 - a) between governments
 - b) between governments and the music and broadcasting industries
 - c) between the various levels of the music and broadcasting industries.

4. Lack of promotional support/Complementarity of other media

- Examine the problem of centralized distribution outside Quebec.
- Enhanced role for television stations in the production and broadcasting of videoclips.
 - Enhanced role for the print media.
 - Government support (grants).
 - Better training for promoters, creative artists and producers.
 - Revitalize network of theatres.
- Need for televised information programs on the entertainment world (for example, "Entertainment Tonight") to promote artists.

5. Excessive specialization/Audience fragmentation

- Status quo regarding the number of French-language and English-language stations in a saturated market.
- Promote the decompartmentalization of formats.

6. Broadcasting of French-language selections during peak listening hours

- Review time segment percentages with respect to French-language content.

B) PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS AFFECTING THE AVAILABILITY OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE MUSICAL PRODUCTS

1. Production

A. Lack of experienced producers

Training programs for producers and managers:

1. Employment and Immigration Canada
2. Colleges and universities
3. Publication of a catalogue of production agencies.

Access to risk capital.

Need for assistance programs for recognized professionals, not just for novices.

Attendance at international conferences.

B. Lack of risk capital

- Recovery of part of amusement taxes (for example, paid by bars, discotheques, record stores).
- Funds generated by taxes should be returned to the industry or used for product development (rather than going to the government's consolidated fund).
- Possibility of setting up agencies to divide up generated funds should be looked at.
- Require multinationals to reinvest a percentage of their Canadian revenue in the development of Canadian products (surcharge or reinvestment by a third party).
- Governments should find funds in their present taxes on the manufacture of recorded music (or direct the taxes on manufacturing toward the recording industry).

- SODICC should show greater flexibility by:
 - ° eliminating administration charges (notary/accounting);
 - ° revising interest rates, which are too high;
 - ° clarifying its role (is it a sponsor, shareholder or full partner?).
- Adjustment in levels of surcharges (for small producers with sales figures of less than \$50 000 a year).

2. Marketing

A. Lack of television presence

- Make television broadcasters aware of artists' special development needs (i.e. consider the role of Radio-Canada).
- Encourage television broadcasters to spread music specials and galas over the year and to avoid broadcasting the same types of programs in the same time slots.
- Help to revive Quebec vocal music by enhancing program presentation (variety, other).
- Encourage negotiation on the issue of replays of Quebec videoclips.
- Bring about such consultation as soon as possible taking into account the new support projects of both governments.
- Invest in the production of videoclips.
- Encourage the promotion of new technologies (transmission via satellite, simulcasts).

B. Predominance of multinationals

- All funds generated by "taxing" multinationals should be redistributed taking into account the different music categories.
- With regard to display of Quebec products in stores, awareness campaigns should be undertaken (marketing, distribution, "best window display", etc.).

C. Small market

- Government support for export.
- Continue efforts to penetrate Francophone markets in Europe (France, Belgium, etc.).
- To meet international competition, favour our own music rather than imitating American music.
- Need for more publishers.

3. Pirating (illegal reproduction of musical compositions)

- Impose a substantial tax on blank tapes and video cassettes and reinvest the revenue at the various levels of the recording industry.
- Reinstate the Quebec tax of \$2 on blank video cassettes and reinvest the revenue in the production of videoclips.

4. Copyright Act

- Speed up revision of the Act.

5. Radio broadcasting of French-language products

- Encourage the CRTC to make a decision on the principle of broadcasting French-language vocal music throughout the day.
- Incentives should be granted to broadcasters who air more than the percentage of French-language vocal music required by the CRTC (e.g. licence rights, government advertising).

7. Recommendations

At a meeting on 19 September, the members of the task force came to a consensus on the recommendations to be made.

1. Recommendations on the problems affecting radio broadcasting

- A. Regarding the problems raised by competition from the Anglophone media, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the CRTC seriously re-examine the use of the FM band on cable for the carriage of sound signals of music video services, since this currently takes place in non-conformity with the parameters imposed on FM broadcasters that use the same distribution system;
 - the CRTC require French-language stations in Montréal to promote Canadian French-language vocal music;
 - the CRTC should pay greater attention to ensuring that French-language stations broadcast spoken word content in their own language.
- B. Regarding the problems concerning the supply of French-language products, the subcommittee recommends that:
- the ACRTF set up a distribution system to supply French-language stations in regions far from urban centres, both in and outside Quebec;
 - the CRTC carefully examine the possibility of establishing more specific procedures for the use of promotional funds and programs by broadcasters for the development of Canadian talent;
 - the CRTC propose to the Government of Quebec that it channel the taxes paid by business (i.e., discotheques, bars, retailers) into a program to be administered by the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs.
- C. Regarding the problems raised by the bias against Quebec French-language products, the subcommittee recommends that:
- producers consistently and adequately promote their products and provide sufficient information about them to encourage broadcasters to take a more active interest in them (e.g., encourage events such as "Rencontre '85");
 - the CRTC endeavour to make both levels of government aware of its new policies concerning, among other things, marketing problems;
 - the CRTC endeavour to make the provincial and federal governments aware of the problems faced by trade publications in promoting Canadian French-language vocal music, recordings and variety shows;

- co-operation between the two levels of government and the recording industry be enhanced.

D. Regarding the problems raised by the lack of promotional support, the subcommittee recommends that:

- a marketing centre, similar to the one in Toronto, be established in metropolitan Montréal;
- the CRTC, when renewing broadcasting licences, attempt to encourage the production of programs featuring Canadian French-language music and to develop the new generation of musicians;
- with regard to assistance for the training of promoters and writers and composers, the two governments enhance existing training programs and look into the possibility of setting up other programs.

It is also recommended that the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs increase its grants for tours and concerts in Canada and abroad. Similarly, the new generation of musical talent should be given the opportunity to perform on tours and during concerts by recognized professionals, and the network of concert halls should be developed, especially small halls throughout Quebec.

E. Regarding the problems raised by over-specialization of broadcast music formats, the subcommittee recommends that:

- broadcasters not commit themselves to programming slots that prevent them from meeting CRTC requirements;

F. The subcommittee recommends that:

- the CBC take a leading role in the promotion and broadcasting of French-language Canadian content on both television and radio.

2. Recommendations with respect to the problems affecting the availability of French-language musical products

A. Regarding the problems concerning production, in particular the lack of experienced producers, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs develop training programs for people in the industry;

- the rules governing SODICC programs be made more flexible to take into account the kind of industry the agency is designed to serve;
- programs be established to enable both levels of government to guarantee loans to the recording industry;
- the federal government be encouraged to find tax shelters similar to the ones that exist in the film industry;
- the provincial and federal governments offer financial assistance to people interested in attending international conferences such as those organized by "Billboard" magazine.

Regarding the problems concerning production, in particular those caused by the lack of risk capital, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the policy of the federal Department of Communications include mechanisms requiring multinationals to reinvest a percentage of their Canadian revenue in the development of Canadian products;
- Loto-Quebec take part in promotional programs similar to those in which Wintario participated in Ontario.

Finally, with respect to risk capital, the subcommittee specifically recommends that:

- a new national agency similar to SODICC be set up, perhaps as an extension of Telefilm Canada;
- the tax on the manufacture of Canadian recordings be withdrawn. Moreover, the revenue from the manufacturing tax on foreign products should be reinvested in the production of Canadian records.

B. Regarding problems concerning marketing, in particular the lack of a television presence, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the CRTC encourage television broadcasters to spread out more evenly the broadcasting of galas and similar programs. This would avoid the broadcasting of the same types of programs in the same time slots.

With respect to marketing, taking into account the dominant position of the multinationals, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the music industry encourage both levels of government to find innovative ways to make retailers and consumers more interested in French-language vocal music.

Specifically, the subcommittee recommends, among other things, that:

- record retailers be made aware of the importance of playing Quebec records in their stores;
- contests be organized by the music industry for radio stations, during which music directors can predict the possible success of newly released recordings.

Finally, regarding marketing, a number of recommendations were made by the subcommittee concerning the small market.

The subcommittee recommends:

- that French-language products be favoured in new communications technologies.

Similarly, the subcommittee hopes that Canadian French-language products become more competitive on the international market.

- C. Regarding the problems raised by the illegal reproduction of musical compositions (i.e., the re-recording of music selections in the home on cassettes), the subcommittee recommends that:

- the federal and provincial governments impose a heavy sales tax (15 to 20%) on blank tapes and reinvest the revenue in creation and production;
- the \$2 tax on blank video cassettes be maintained and the revenue be reinvested entirely in creation and production.

- D. Regarding the problems concerning the Copyright Act, the subcommittee recommends that:

- the federal government ensure greater protection for artists with respect to copyright so that they may have the means to continue their creative work.

Conclusions regarding the CRTC requirement of 65% French-language vocal music content:

The whole subcommittee recommends that:

- the CRTC give itself adequate control mechanisms to ensure that all its regulations and standards are adhered to;
- the CRTC make appropriate representations to government authorities to obtain the technical facilities and human resources necessary for it to carry out its mandate.

With respect to the 65% standard, because no consensus was reached, the two co-chairmen submit the following observations:

The CRTC should maintain its current policy as described in the Public Notice on the Review of Radio (Public Notice 83-43) until such time as the program to assist the production of Canadian Francophone musical talent has achieved the desired result, that is, the stimulation of creative activity and production. The current levels would be maintained, while the difficulties faced by some specialized radio stations would be recognized. When examining licence renewal applications including requests for a reduction in the required percentage of French-language music broadcast, the Commission would judge each case on its merits, taking into account specific considerations such as:

1. the station's authorized music format and the effort it has made to abide by it;
2. the way the licensee has spread out the required French-language vocal music in its proposed programming schedule;
3. the effectiveness of concrete, ongoing measures taken by the licensee to contribute to the development of French-language musical talent, based on tangible results;
4. the average percentage of French-language content broadcast by the licensee over the preceding annual cycle;
5. the competition in a given market.

The co-chairmen are of the opinion that the Commission should follow developments closely either by setting up a permanent committee or through regular,

frequent consultations, and that it should review its French-language vocal music standard in 1988, when the programs designed to assist the production of Canadian French-language recordings have achieved the desired results.

Montreal, 6 November 1985

Mr. Jean-Pierre Coallier
Mr. Denys Bergeron
Co-chairmen of the Task Force on
French-language Popular Music

Dear Sirs:

As broadcaster members of the Task Force on French-Language Popular Music, we have read the fourth draft of the report you intend to submit shortly to the advisory committee established by the CRTC.

We hereby wish to dissociate ourselves from the recommendations in the report, which in no way reflect our position on the issues raised by the CRTC in its Public Notice 1985-100.

We fully recognize the merit in the exercise proposed by the Commission, as was clearly shown by our involvement in the various Task Force sessions. We did, however, point out to you during recent meetings held to draft the report, that we could not adhere to a number of conclusions and recommendations that you described as having been the result of a consensus reached by the Task Force.

Accordingly, we wish to inform you that we do not agree with the report and do not intend to sign it. We, therefore, ask you to indicate this in the report and to inform the advisory committee when the report is submitted.

As broadcasters facing the problems raised in Public Notice CRTC 1985-100, we of course are very much interested in finding solutions to these problems. We, therefore, intend to form a group with other broadcasters to examine these issues and to submit our positions and recommendations to the CRTC.

In spite of our disagreement with the other members of the Task Force which you co-chaired, we wish to express our appreciation for your efforts and to assure you that we will devote all the energy and resources necessary to the group of broadcasters so as to find possible solutions to the problems facing French-language broadcasters.

CKOI-FM, Radio-Futura
per Bob Beauchamp
(signed)

CITE-FM, Télémedia Québec
per Danièle Malenfant
(signed)

CJMF-FM, CJMF FM 93 Ltée
per Claude Thibodeau
(signed)

CKMF-FM, Communications Radio-Mutuel
per François L'Herbier
(signed)

FRANCOPHONE INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL SELECTIONS
ON FM RADIO

OUR CONCLUSIONS

SPACQ-UDA
November 1985

Introduction

On 16 July 1985, the Advisory Committee of the CRTC on French-Language Music was established under the chairmanship of André Bureau of the CRTC.

(CRTC News Release
16 July 1985)

On behalf of the writers, composers and performers that we represent, we agreed to work actively on the subcommittee set up at this first meeting under the co-chairmanship of Jean-Pierre Coalier (CIEL-FM) and Denys Bergeron (ADISQ).

We shared the hopes of the CRTC Chairman, Mr. André Bureau, when he stated that:

The results of the committee's work and its recommendations could have a significant impact on the future of the recording industry in Quebec, as well as helping to determine the role of broadcasting in the promotion and use of French-language recordings.

Promotion and broadcasting of recordings
by radio broadcasters: Mission impossible?

During the course of the subcommittee's work, we noted, to our great disappointment, that no consensus emerged on the "role of broadcasting in the promotion and use of French-language recordings."

Why?

Because from the very beginning and throughout the exercise, the representatives of FM broadcasters (CKOI, CJMF and CITE-FM) made every effort to show that, if there was a problem, it was created by "someone else!"

Writers
Musicians
Performers
Distributors
Promoters
Television broadcasters
Record stores
Governments
The Star System...

From listening to them, one would think that the recording and entertainment industries are the only ones responsible for the current situation and should administer (and help to pay for) the required miracle drug.

However, the broadcasters, through the influence and control they exercise over the broadcasting of products, are the ones who are mostly responsible.

We feel that if our music and songs were broadcast more widely and fairly - **and this is really the problem in this debate** - then creative activity and the industry would be stimulated, and this would have a marked effect.

The exception?

At the subcommittee's second meeting, some broadcasters put forward as a possible solution the setting up of a private fund, financially supported by government, for the production of records, videoclips, radio programs and so on.

Faced with a declining recording and entertainment industry, artists could not but approve of such an initiative.

Broadcasters said that the fund, modelled on FACTOR, a fund to assist Anglophone production, would increase the volume of products available in certain categories (dance music, rock) and even increase the quality of the products (constantly discredited, in our presence, according to broadcasters' own criteria, which were never clearly defined).

Must they be reminded that a number of songs that fit in very well with their format remained unknown because they did not carry a guarantee of instant success?

Therefore, while we support the initiative, we would hope that it will apply to all kinds of instrumental and vocal music.

Some broadcasters tried to use the fund as a bargaining chip in negotiating a reduction in the percentage of French-language vocal music broadcast by their stations.

WE WILL BE OPPOSED TO BROADCASTERS' "BUYING" A REDUCTION IN THE REQUIRED PERCENTAGE OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE VOCAL MUSIC THROUGH A MEASURE TO SUPPORT THEIR OWN INDUSTRY.

Moreover,

SHOULD GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN THE FUND BE FORTHCOMING, WE WILL DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT TIE SUCH PARTICIPATION TO OPEN MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND AND BALANCED SELECTION BOARDS REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE FIELD IN WHICH GRANTS ARE MADE, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE DEFENCE OF ARTISTS' RIGHTS.

Our recommendations

In view of the comments and position stated previously, we recommend to the CRTC:

- that it remind broadcasters that the present national broadcasting policy stipulates that:

the Canadian broadcasting system should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada; (our emphasis)

(Broadcasting Act, section 3(b))

Consequently,

- that it remind broadcasters that they are responsible for the cultural use they make of the Canadian airwaves assigned to them through licensing.
- that it maintain the percentage of French-language instrumental and vocal music (65%, as a general rule) and put a freeze on the lower percentages already allowed certain broadcasters.

In our opinion, the current level of French-language vocal music is high enough to meet the daily programming requirement of 65%.

This is why we request

- that the CRTC exercise a more exhaustive control, over a significantly long period of time, to be determined by the Commission, over the percentage of instrumental and vocal music from Francophone countries and French Canada broadcast by French-language FM stations.
- that the CRTC impose concrete measures, as soon as possible, to solve the problems concerning the promotion and broadcasting of French-language vocal music.
- that the CRTC deal severely with broadcasters who do not meet the standard.
- that the CRTC encourage English-language broadcasters to broadcast more French-language instrumental and vocal music.
- that the CRTC protect Canadian content in such a way as to encourage broadcasters to broadcast and promote selections other than those based on the American model.

Conclusion

We hope that the efforts of the last few meetings have not been used only to justify the claims of certain broadcasters, who, between ourselves, are in the best financial position.

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We would hope that the CRTC realizes that the problem we have discussed goes far beyond the simple issue of percentage. It is a problem of language and popular culture, and the creative artists are the ones who have to deal with it every day.

UNION DES ARTISTES

29 November 1985

BY COURIER

Mr. Denis Bergeron
Mr. Jean-Pierre Coallier
Co-Chairmen
CRTC Committee
c/o CIEL-FM
89, rue St-Charles ouest
LONGUEUIL, Quebec
J4H 1C5

Gentlemen:

This letter is to confirm that the Union des Artistes and the SPACQ endorse the recommendations contained in version 5 of the report you issued in accordance with your mandate. We endorse these recommendations, with the exception of the last one, i.e. that which you make as Co-Chairmen. We are unable to support this last recommendation since, in our opinion, it contradicts certain of the preceding recommendations. Moreover, this recommendation does not take into account the arguments, analysis and conclusions that our organizations presented during the proceedings of the subcommittee and the committee.

Therefore, we maintain the position which was communicated to you at the last meeting of the plenary committee, in a document dated November 1985 - SPACQ/UDA and entitled "Musique et Chanson francophone sur les ondes des radio MF, nos conclusions" (Francophone Instrumental and Vocal Selections broadcast on FM stations: Our Conclusions) and we continue to view this position as a high priority. The first five pages of this document contain our arguments in support of our recommendation, which is presented on page 6 and thereafter in the same document.

We hope that you will give this recommendation all the attention it deserves since, as we would like to remind you, it reflects the position and wishes of the overwhelming majority of artists, creators and performers in the cultural field in Quebec, and also has the support of a number of prominent figures associated directly or indirectly with the cultural community in Quebec.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
(signed)

Serge Demers
Director General

PERFORMING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION OF CANADA LTD.

28 November 1985

Denys Bergeron/Jean-Pierre Coallier
Consultative Committee on French-Language Music
89, St-Charles Ouest
Longueuil, Quebec
J4H 1C5

Gentlemen:

First of all, we believe that a station which holds a French-language licence should broadcast a majority of French-language content in accordance with Section 3, paragraph b) of the Canadian Broadcasting Act. The 65% minimum appears reasonable to us.

Secondly, we believe that Canadian content should have a major presence in the broadcasting of Canadian stations. The 30% minimum in this case seems to us to be more than reasonable and both the CRTC and broadcasters should make an effort to increase it (see enclosure).

When we choose a foreign culture and impose it massively on our nation, we become strangers to ourselves. Although we should not isolate ourselves from foreign cultures, neither should we become submerged by them.

I congratulate you on the exemplary work you have done.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Claude Lafontaine
Director - Quebec Division
Performing Rights Organization
of Canada

CL/sm
encl.

SOCIÉTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES INDUSTRIES
DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS

November 14, 1985

Mr. Denys Bergeron and Mr. Jean-Pierre Coalier
Consultative Committee on French-Language Music
89, rue St-Charles Ouest
Longueuil, Quebec
J4H 1C5

Gentlemen:

Please find enclosed a few brief comments by the SODICC on the report of the Task Force to the Advisory Committee on French-language Music.

1. The SODICC particularly favours initiatives to stimulate the production and promotion of Quebec products. The Société is ready to co-operate and participate in specific projects to advance the development of Quebec cultural industries.
2. The SODICC supports all of the recommendations of the Task Force, although certain parameters should be clarified in order to lead to specific action.
3. Finally, the SODICC is prepared to participate, within the context of its mandate and in accordance with its development plan and financial policies, in providing financial assistance to firms which have plans for stimulating the marketing of Quebec products.

It would be desirable to move beyond the divergent opinions expressed to ensure that practical proposals are implemented which will produce and support an economically and culturally dynamic industry.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Michel d'Astous
Director of Planning and
Communications

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GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC
MINISTÈRE DES COMMUNICATIONS

A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE

A SUBMISSION BY THE
MINISTÈRE DES COMMUNICATIONS DU QUÉBEC
TO THE
CRTC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FRENCH-LANGUAGE MUSIC

QUÉBEC
NOVEMBER 13, 1985

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

As in any assessment of a complex situation, it appears that the Committee's work to date has produced at least one piece of good news: the major problems of the vocal performing, recording and radio industries have been identified. The bad news, which always seems to accompany the good, is that there does not seem to be agreement on the solutions.

Although the exercise has certainly not been a failure, it is unfortunate that it has not always been possible to achieve a broader consensus and closer co-operation, that common conclusions have not always been found, and that proposals attractive to all have not been made.

An overall reduction in the minimum requirement for 65% French-language vocal music could have such a major impact on the cultural industries of Quebec and French-speaking Canada that this step must be approached with the greatest caution. Above all, we must avoid allowing the supply problems in the two most "modern" categories, "progressive rock" and "dance music", although genuine, from serving as a pretext for altering the rules which govern the entire industry.

A REMINDER

It is necessary to recall that what is at stake here, ultimately, is our ability as Francophones to maintain a strong presence in the vocal music, recording and radio broadcasting fields, as well as in television, in Quebec and in French-speaking Canada generally. Our task is to meet the challenge of equalling the success of our real competitors of today and tomorrow, the English Canadian, American and international English-language products.

THE ROLE OF THE MCQ

The Ministère des Communications du Québec, through its media development assistance, is prepared to co-operate actively in the solution of the problems encountered. Through its research and analysis work, through its concern with encouraging the parties involved to work together, it has in the past and plans to continue in the future to contribute to stimulating development. Consider, for example, the case of TV5, in which competitors joined forces in order to export French-language audio-visual production. Consider also the report on French-language television, in which the MCQ has become deeply involved in order to improve the competitiveness of this industry. Moreover, this contact with the television sector is leading the department to play a non-negligible role in the development of video-clips in French.

A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE

Concerned with formulating fair and reasonable policies which will enable us to meet these challenges, but knowing above all that we must stimulate French-language products without resorting to excessive protectionism, the Ministère des Communications du Québec:

1. Proposes that it is necessary to ensure that steps to assist production, marketing, and distribution be implemented as soon as possible and that their development and impact be monitored;
2. Will be particularly sensitive to the official positions of French-language broadcasters as a whole with respect to standards for French-language vocal music, while taking into account the positions of writers, composers and performers, as well as their promoters, to whom we should also pay close attention;
3. Is working to carry out more in-depth analyses of the entire vocal music, recording, radio and television (both traditional and non-traditional) industries in order to establish an overall view of the problem, which will then enable appropriate solutions to be found.

The department may seek input from the parties concerned to further clarify its positions and will submit them for consultation.

It is in everyone's interest to ensure that our French-language cultural and communication industries be strong and viable.

However, we must not stop there. We must continue to work tirelessly to build and consolidate these industries. Achieving a balance among all these trends may be difficult, but it is nonetheless possible and desirable.

ANNE GIRARD
Direction générale du développement